Chapter 7: "1946/53 – The princeling"

After four daughters in a row the tensions ran high, what sex would have the fifth child of Sibylla. The child arrived April 30, 1946. The birth took place in Sibylla's bedchamber out in Haga and was quite difficult. Sibylla was administered nitrous oxide. As at previous births, she was assisted by her midwife Miss Alma Landelius. At the final stage of birth, Professor John Olow was present. Edmund was also present but fainted with the strain. The boy saw daylight at 10:20, was healthy and weighed 3,500 grams. Edmund's chamberlain, Baron of Ugglas, immediately threw himself on the telephone. Princess Birgitta describes the commotion:

Nothing has made me more confused than the birth of Carl Gustav. Nenne [nanny Ingrid Björnberg] and all four of us were sent to [hotel] Siljansborg [in Rättvik, Dalarna]. Nenne got a phone call from home. When she returned, she shone all over her face, threw Titti [Princess Christina] into the ceiling with delight and told her that Mom had a boy. Soon there was a crowd around us and in the middle of it all a journalist called to ask if we were happy. When Nenne took it, the journalist just said: - I don't have to ask, I've never heard such noise.

And noisy it was, old normally reasonable people screamed, rushed and jumped about. As the day progressed it got worse..

When we sat down at the table, every lady in the hotel came up to our table, sniffled, cried and congratulated us on getting a BROTHER. They said "BROTHER" as if they were sucking on some kind of sweet, while they continued crying again and looking weird. A brother is a brother, why start crying?

There we sat all four girls and wondered and it never dawned on us that it was more wonderful that mom had birthed a boy than that she birthed us. But we never felt insulted, then or later. And the time we glanced at each other, shook our heads, felt embarrassed and and didn't comprehend what was going on.¹

Since it was a prince and an heir to the throne, a quadruple salute, 84 shots, was fired from the cannons on Skeppsholmen and the various military facilities in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Karlskrona, Vaxholm, Härnösand and from the larger Swedish warships regardless of where they were and there was a thanksgiving service in the Castle Chapel.

[Archbishop Eidem and court chaplain Bokander arrive at Te Deum at the Castle Chapel.]

When the horn sounds with a long note... This is how it says in Exodus and so we experienced the Te Deum, which was held in the Royal Chapel some day after Prince Carl Gustav's birth. It was not the archbishop's warm prayers of thanksgiving, it was not the prayers and Benedicamus, that made the strongest impression but the psalm Now God thanks all people, with all his heart. It was sung to the accompaniment of horns and drums, that gave a distinctive mood with the organ and the cannons fired from Skeppsholmen. That was the real cantata. Back at Haga, even the happy Princess

¹ Prinsessa på Stockholms slott. H.K.H. prinsessan Birgitta berättar för ldun/VJ: s medarbetare Anita Lagercrantz. Vecko Journalen, 1964:11.

Sibylla was able to follow the thanksgiving service thanks to the fact that the Swedish Radio Company arranged a special live broadcast, an arrangement that of course gave her special pleasure. Surely we women being in the same predicament are equally happy whether it is a boy or a girl, but it cannot be helped - despite the law of jurisdiction and the woman's efforts to reach all positions - it still feels in some way reassuring for the monarchy and the security of the country that we have been given a crown prince. The princess herself is of the same opinion. She said: "It doesn't matter which, girl or boy, but for the sake of hos grandfather the king I hope it will be a boy!" And this time she really saw the old king lean his silver head over the great grandchild who will once wear his crown.

On the same morning that prince Carl Gustaf saw the light of day, the princess received the first visits of the king and the Crown Prince Couple.²

The constitution still demanded "eyewitnesses", but this had been reinterpreted so that they did not have to be present, but resided in a nearby room. Immediately after birth Sibylla's lady-in-waiting Stina Nordenfalk carried him there and presented him to Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson, Foreign Minister Östen Undén and Mistress of the Robes Louise Rålamb who all signed the constitutional document that a prince child had arrived into the world. His name was confirmed at a cabinet meeting the next hour: Carl Gustaf Folke Hubertus. The first two names by tradition, the third after Edmund's friend [Folke Bernadotte], the fourth after Sibylla's beloved brother [dead in the war].³

The baptism was performed on June 7, 1946 by the Archbishop with the reminder "No one knows his fate. Amen." Afterwards, the sword side of the Bernadotte family retreated into a secluded room of the castle and court photographer Lennart Nilsson took the very famous photograph of four generations of male Bernadotte and their Orders according to the same composition as 1906 when Edmund was born. Sarcastic feminists have since presented these photographs as evidence that the Bernadottes do not reproduce in the usual way but by cloning. CG was appointed Duke of Jämtland. The princesses were not allowed to become duchesses. The Marshal of the Realm explained that it was because they would automatically lose the title when they married.⁴

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What has been preserved from CG's first year is that during the summer he lay in his stroller in the sun near the water covered with a net to keep the flies away and that Edmund during the Christmas celebrations at Drottningholm castle carried him around so that he could see his upcoming residence. CG had just learned to say "Dad" when Edmund January 26 1947 died in a plane crash.

Edmund obviously loved his son, but that did not stop him from disciplining him from day one. The day-to-day handling was left to Ingrid Björnberg who had the same views as Edmund and Sibylla when it came to raising children: "Children must not be spoiled". For CG, this meant when screaming in the cradle, no one comforted him. After Edmund's death,

² Sverige har fått en prins, 84 skott. Carl Gustaf Folke Hubertus. Tacksägelsegudstjänsten direktsänd. Vecko Journalen, 1946:18.

³ Hur prins Carl Gustaf fostras till kung av Sverige, del 1. Året Runt, 1947:15.

⁴ Husmodern, 1946:22.

a "family council" was appointed for CG's upbringing. The composition is not known, but probably consisted of Ingrid Björnberg, Edmund's adjutant Malcolm Murray and the two godfathers Gustaf V and Folke Bernadotte, the only ones mentioned in this context. CG had seven more godparents from nearby royal houses but more as a formality.

Folke Bernadotte was also a strong supporter of the hard regime, but was killed on a mission in Israel in 1948. After that CG was raised exclusively by Sibylla, Ingrid Björnberg and the sisters. Sister Margaretha "described him as the wildest thing that existed when he was little, he never lay still in his bed. The family had to build a fence to keep him there. Finally, some kind of net was put over the top, but he managed to tear that away." The siblings used to play with him as if he were a doll. It amused them to hide CG in strange places and let the servants search. While CG was too small to have lunch and dinner with the others, tea-time was reserved for him. CG held court for his sisters and enjoyed being the centre of attention. In 1948, Princess Margaretha gave him a recording of The Andrews Sisters' Cuanto La Gusta. CG thought it was about himself, because he was sometimes called "Usta", and he played the record until it was worn down and he received a new one. In court circles at the time, one used to joke that CG was Sweden's most admonished but at the same time most spoiled child.

In "Diary from Haga" and in contemporary newspapers, a big issue was made of how CG as a matter of policy was shown to the outside world. He was supposed to get used to being "looked at". Apart from a period being two years of age, it seems to have worked well. Being at his worst, he hid from the photographers, threw toys at them, made faces and ran around until everybody lost their patience. Later there were isolated episodes. As mentioned earlier, CG was very difficult during a film production in the summer of 1950 with the result that "Holmquist then took out a teddy bear, pushed it into the hands of the heir to the throne and roared: Play, kid, play! And the kid played nice!" In the summer of 1951 he was completely impossible and put his tongue out to the photographer all the time. There are records of a flight show on June 3 and a short time afterwards when he is at the wheel of the ferry to Öland. The photographer complained to Sibylla, who slapped him. Something similar happened in 1952. Author Stieg Trenter & photographer Karl Werner Gullers were at the castle to photograph CG:

The book The Old Town of Stockholm should include pictures of the prince. "When the pictures were to be taken, the then four-year-old prince was not in the mood. He came to the room at the castle where we were waiting, but he was sullen and angry, did not say a word, just stared at us with crossed arms. Here was a job going wrong. Then Stieg, who stuttered when becoming eager, addressed him.

- Leet mee geet thiis straaight.

And continued stuttering in the same manner:

– You little rascal. Now you do as we say, or else I'll beat you blue and yellow. That landed. The little prince had never been spoken to like that, he started playing and did everything we asked for. Fifty fun pictures in a quarter of an hour, all with him terrified."

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⁵ Barbro Holmström. En ovanligt vanlig flicka. Vecko Revyn, 1954:43.

⁶ Marilou von Stedingk. Margarethas svåraste timmar. Del 3. Svensk Damtidning, 1965:35.

⁷ Björn Vinberg. 50 år med kungen: från lillprins till monark. Pressens bild, 1996.

⁸ Sten Hedman. Yrke: vik kung. SE, 1971:39.

⁹ Året Runt, 1984:52.

[One of the photos is available as the cover of the book "Media and Monarchy in Sweden" (2009). CG is dressed in a miniature version of Edmund's Guard uniform and looks extremely ill at ease.]

At CG's 15th birthday Ingrid Björnberg stated that she had wanted to raise him to "loyalty, honesty and order" unclear in what way. Folke Bernadotte recommended that the delinquent openly admit their pranks, so perhaps that was the method. It seems to require the suspect to be questioned and the sisters to blab. At a young age, CG emphasized that he was never going to blab himself. Maybe a protest. He was kept short. Björnberg in particular emphasized that he had no position as "man of the house" but had been treated by his sisters as an ordinary brother and that Sibylla began to inquire about his views first when he turned 15.

CG's first official showing was on Gustaf Vs 90th birthday June 16, 1948. CG sat in Sibylla's lap and seemed interested in the surroundings. However, he was not allowed to participate in the funeral procession of 1950, but watched it through a window. He felt disappointed that none of the invited royals wore a crown or royal purple. In adulthood, CG's most vivid memory of Gustaf V was his stubby moustache.

Sibylla and Gustav V got along well and she was the closest to him during his last time. She attended his meals and held his hand until death. Gustaf V's testament stated that the summer residence Solliden went to CG but that Sibylla should manage it until he came of age. Sibylla spent a lot of time cleaning up the garden and decorating the 35 rooms in a more bright English style. Rest & relaxation was long walks with the daughters in tow. CG was too small to accompany them. The "Haga Princesses" were dressed up and photographed with CG once every summer. The family visited. There were many tourists who hoped to catch a glimpse of the royals. Sibylla always arrived in style. Sometimes in a Mercedes Benz, sometimes in a Humber Super Snipe MK II sedan.

CG had recurrent ear infections due to an enlarged gland behind his nose for which he underwent surgery in 1950. In the summer of 1952 he had a fever of 40°C and severe abdominal pain. The doctor found acute appendicitis. CG was transported to the county hospital in Borgholm for immediate surgery. The next day, he was tired but free from fever, healthy enough to be bored. Ingrid Björnberg spent the night at the hospital so that he would not feel abandoned. His mother would visit every now and then to make sure he was okay.

Like Edmund, CG was interested in both animals and machinery. For his fourth birthday, he had his own dog, the Pekingese Toy. Toy was unbelievably fragile: "Toy came to Sweden by plane, well installed in extra heated box. Toy was so extraordinarily sensitive to the Swedish climate that he lived in a bathroom and when he was released for a walk he appeared in a specially knitted cardigan. For a royal household with its annual movements, little Toy finally became too fragile. He was therefore given to someone who could devote himself more fully to him."

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When CG became Crown Prince in 1950, there was strong interest in who he was as a person and how he should be educated. There was no immediate hurry, but the demands formulated could make any boy tremble in the knees:

¹⁰ Vecko Revyn, 1950:47.

¹¹ Anders Lundebeck. Sibyllas hundar. Husmodern, 1955:35.

[A royal child is brought up both for a social position and a profession.] ... When Crown Prince Carl Gustaf grows up, he must not only acquire the same school knowledge as all other children in a country with compulsory schooling, he must also educate himself for his high and responsible work. He must have a greater knowledge of the structure, functions and economy of the state and of society than other schoolboys; he must receive military and political education and he must acquire as wideranging and thorough a general education as possible. But before he has come so far, his surroundings must know his intelligence and talents, so that it knows what to build on.¹²

CG's life in 1951/52 looked like this:

The seriousness, the royal duties of representation and the upbringing to king that awaits him have not yet begun. He plays with cars, with carpentry, likes cartoons, squabbles with his sisters, is at one moment rowdy, in the next just like other spirited six-year-olds.

The Prince's Day begins early. Already at quarter past seven he goes up and often he wakes up earlier and plays a while before the nurse Miss Ingrid Björnberg, who for 13 years has been with Princess Sibylla's children and has been caring for the Crown Prince since he was born comes into his room. He eats breakfast with the sisters before going to school. At nine o'clock it will be a trip to Drottningholm or Haga Park where he plays all morning with a couple of peers. He eats lunch with with Princess Sibylla and the rest of the family and then after a few hours' rest the Prince rides or goes to a craft school. He is always careful to get in time for classes and insists on being dressed just like the comrades. After dinner it is a rather tired little prince who crawls to bed at about 19 o'clock.

- Meatballs with spaghetti and then lobster, the prince replies without hesitation, when asked about his most loved dishes and he adds "that will be for my birthday".

Carpentry is one of the Prince's best loved pursuits and you can hear him hammer in the royal nursery. Outdoors car riding is probably the most fun and skiing of course in Haga Park as long as there is snow. Still some time, the little prince may devote himself to play, but soon the school and the seriousness will begin.¹³

CG's craft teacher was the artist Axel Nordell. The first year Nordell was employed privately by Signhild von Essens carpentry school, Linnégatan. He then started his own at Östermalm. CG attended him one year while in kindergarten and also the next two years. "The prince, as he was called then, was a little rascal with a twinkle in his eye." CG even wanted extra lessons on Saturdays at the castle. He placed a bench in his bedroom and a bell [to call in Nordell]. CG preferred building boats that he painted blue.

In the autumn of 1952, CG was supposed to start attending elementary school. The closest such was the Nicolai public school situated nearby in the Old Town. Just in case, Sibylla contacted Director General Nils Gustav Rosén at the National Board of Education. He

¹² Brita Hiort af Ornäs. Kronprins Carl Gustaf. Vecko Journalen, 1950:48.

¹³ Svenska Dagbladet, 1952-04-19.

¹⁴ Börje Dorch. Jag lärde lillprinsen bygga träbåtar. Året Runt, 1984:33.

referred her to school director Erik Ekman who recommended Djurgårdens elementary school. This was small, about 100 students, and lay beautifully secluded outside Skansen, Djurgården. The school building was newly renovated: the inside bright and inviting. An idyll where CG could make his first contacts with Swedish peers from all social classes. Sibylla went over to watch it and also spoke to the headmaster who recommended another school since he could not guarantee that CG would be met with the proper respect. It was later revealed that the diplomatic children and working-class children at the breaks were fighting pitched battles and that the pedagogy was very robust, which was code word for the teachers to beat the working-class children on their fingers with a ruler. This was not in itself enough to dissuade Sibylla who thought it was good for CG's character development "to struggle with an entire class". The visit came to the knowledge of journalist Marianne Hööks however, who had a son there and led to an open debate:

The age at which society begins to interfere in the individual's life has also come for the Crown Prince of Sweden. The follower of the throne, together with the other representatives of the men of 1946, is to begin school and it has been decided that he, as the first in the family since Carl XIV Johan's bourgeois school days, will attend a public school. This new feature of the democratic propaganda around the royal house has already proved more effective than previous well-intentioned and peripheral grips, such as the abolition of the court suit and the reduction of the horsepower in front of the royal carriage from six to four. The intended reaction can be heard in any mode: "Think, just like normal children!" (Accompanied by a mothers' ambitions: "My little Agneta will now be his classmate.")

Certainly it is not only the propagandistic value of the little prince among other kids in Djurgårdens elementary school, the smallest and most idyllic of Stockholm's schools, that is behind the decision. One of the causes of the repressive isolation, in which our king and his brothers grew up, and witnessed in Prince Wilhelm's memories in a way that seems more frightening than the author probably intended. Unpleasant childhood experiences for which their own children would be spared can be traced even further back. Oscar II put his sons in the Beskow school; King Gustaf V, possibly because of his own sombre school experiences, chose home teaching. One can see the decision as a heartfelt attempt to let the little prince live an "ordinary" life. In addition to the seemingly democratic notion that he should make contact with the people right from the start, by being treated like any other child.

But a princely person has no ordinary life, it is cruel to imply such a thing. It is completely unrealistic to describe the disappointing idea that the prince should be treated "just like ordinary children". So, for example, like his sisters, he will not even be called by first name. His special position will be more strongly emphasized in a public school than ever in a princely school, where his classmates would be the children of court officials and friends of the royal house, a circle where a prince can be expected to attract far less attention than among the primary school children at Djurgården; a circle where a royal lifestyle in all its unnaturalness nevertheless approaches the one you know yourself.

"A high social position is like perfume; the one who wears it will notice it himself the least," said one of the Prince's representatives, citing Queen Christina. But the outside world notices it, it will stick in the nose of mothers all over Lower Östermalm. Even

¹⁵ Tyra Öhrvall. Stålmannen, det är jag det. Året Runt 1952:19.

if the schoolmates get used to the anxieties and special conditions a prince brings into the class room, the adults will not forget. If the prince is not aware of his special position before, then he will be at school, on display and buttered up. Even at the first rumour of his enrolment, the school yard was besieged for hours by photographers and mothers.

And the prince's teacher - a label she will keep for life - is surely no more than human. It should be one of her professional high moments to have the crown prince in her class, and she will react accordingly. He becomes the centre to the detriment of the comrades.

How is the little prince himself equipped for the encounter with the jungle a school is? The contact with the community is hard even for children who have not lived as protected as he. But of course, he will still be protected. The important part of schooling called peer life, the lessons about the world that the walk to and from school is, are not available to him. Contacts with people will be severely censored and subject to all kinds of considerations of appropriateness. Has he so much more opportunities to have normal relations with his peers than in his time Carl XV's daughter, who followed the lessons at the Manilla institute for the deaf when her family lived at Rosendal.

The arguments for the Prince's placement in primary school: equality before the school law and the possibility of contact with reality thus seems reduced to mere appearances; splendid sham democracy.

One good thing can be assume that a prince in class would bring with him. - Problem children would not get manhandled, which otherwise belongs to normal procedure in this "the smallest and most idyllic of Stockholm public schools". Or will the normal percentage of problem children and bad seeds be cleared out of the prince's class? And where does the whole principle of primary education go? In any case, one can be sure that, like Prince Siddharta, he will be protected from the sight of the more brutal realities of life.

Admittedly, the education of the Crown Prince is a national matter, on which it may be worth taking a position. However, there is more than one side to the matter, and the question has a significant tendency to be one-way: Is the school form and the comrades suitable for the prince? For me, there are more pressing problems: Is the Crown Prince a suitable schoolmate for my son.

I do not think so. He's certainly an adorable a child with gold-curly hair. But when it comes to royalty, as is well known, there is a difference between person and symbol.

In a school and a school class, there are all the ingredients of adult society, central figures and secondary figures, a strictly regulated pecking order, which has, moreover, been the subject of psychological investigations.

But with all the interest concentrated on a prince, this rehearsal of life will be warped - more court life than democracy - not only for the prince but for 120 more children. Who's the prince's best friend? And who isn't?

A trifle; children forget so fast, it is said! Wrong, children forget nothing. Childhood experiences are with us for the rest of our lives. The marks of the whip lashing never fade, neither for the prince nor for the other kids.¹⁶

Thus, the monarchy cannot be reformed, it can only be preserved or abolished. It is also harmful to the environment. Maybe a little unexpected coming from just Vecko Journalen, Swedens most royalistic weekly, but Vecko Journalen also had a phalanx of intelligence aristocrats in opposition to birthright. Höök was supported by the old rabble-rouser Per Meurling. According to him, CG must be brought up, not to become one of us, but to become a symbol. He was not permitted to live for his own pleasure, but must consider himself a work of art. Otherwise he could not fulfil his role in society. If he was like people were most, he lacked "raison d'être". 17

Even in royalist circles the debate was lively. The conservative position was that "A king must have his nimbus! He can't be a friend of the family with every human being. Feel free to democratize everything, but never let the crowd feel that the king is one of them. If so the monarchical principal is dead." The reformist position was that "A future king should grow up with his subjects, not only for the sake of the supreme democratic ideals but to weld together authority and people!" 19

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After such a bombardment, Sibylla was in need of reflection. Instead of a public school at Djurgården, CG went to kindergarten at the castle. His teacher teacher Brita Schlyter was educated at the Fröbelinstitut in Norrköping. The system emphasized that children should be allowed to discover their world by themselves, in other words the opposite of knowledge drill. CG and the others learned to paint, sew, cut and play various games. Some times they were entertained by a wizard. The first day of school was September 8. CG entered the hall with applause from some 50 curious. The students were sons of Gustaf VI's adjutants, of Sibylla's friends and of their friends. No girls. Schlyter began by explaining that although CG was an ordinary person, he was not to be addressed as such, and was to be called the Crown Prince. They were not allowed to fight with him. (This was the same as Sibylla's order on the treatment of the princesses: They were to be called "Sessan" plus first names and were also not to be addressed by their first name only.) CG was embarrassed and stared into the floor. He seems to have found the whole thing unpleasant. The nobleman and artist Carl Johan De Geer, now a Republican, was invited at this time to the castle to play with him. CG immediately presented himself without the title: "You can call me Kalle." There are many stories about how CG wanted to escape the constant attention and special treatment. The most famous is the one where Princess Christina says he will become a king and CG strikes her and replies that he will not, he will become a worker.²¹

Schlyter: "I remember Carl Gustaf as a lively and energetic young child. He liked building things and carpentry. He got along with his comrades and was amused by games – he liked to play Indian. I was in charge of seven boys. He was easy going in our circle, but shy in a wider

¹⁶ Marianne Höök. Ska vi ha en prins i vårat plugg? Vecko Journalen, 1952:19.

¹⁷ Per Meurling. Aftonbladet, 1952-05-14.

¹⁸ Anders Lundbeck. "Kronprinsen går i min klass..." Husmodern, 1952:18.

¹⁹ Anders Lundbeck. "Kronprinsen går i min klass..." Husmodern, 1952:18.

²⁰ Anders Lundbeck. "Kronprinsen går i min klass..." Husmodern, 1952:18.

²¹ Ingrid Björnberg. Dagbok från Haga och Stockholms slott. Stockholm:Bonniers, 1975

context. Sensitive, but a little afraid to show his feelings."²² She also remarked on how the other students in the kindergarten subordinated themselves to CG without he even trying: "When the children in the kindergarten had planted their bulbs, a few at a time trudged into the basement and put their pots in a dark corner. 6.5-year-old Carl-Gustaf remained, patted his pot and muttered something inaudible. 'What did you say,' the others asked. I just said: Sleep well, my little bulb, and grow really much', replied Carl-Gustaf as if it was a matter of course. The other four returned, squatted and repeated the little ritual for their own bulbs."²³

The 1952/53 schedule was similar to the year before: "At 7 o'clock in the morning, the Prince's Day begins. He wakes up and half an hour later he sits at the breakfast table. Three days a week he attends the small [play]school at the castle from half 9 - 14 [according to other information 8:30-11]. On days off, he always goes to Haga. Every Tuesday and Friday between 3 and 5 he attends Signhild von Essens craft school. Twice a week he rides at the court stables." Riding lessons were handled by Sven-Olof Wallin. According to him, CG had the potential to be a good rider. He was fearless and had a natural balance. Sibylla often walked with CG in Haga Park, an hour twice a week if the schedule allowed. The reason was both maternal care - children should be exercised! - and to inform CG of his duties as Crown Prince. King Gustaf VI also intervened in CG's upbringing. When performing mischief CG was called into his grandfather's office to be admonished.

In the spring of 1953, CG, together with Sister Christina, carried out their first official task, which was to award first prize at the Scout Scramble Bike contest at the spring fair at Mälarhöjdens public school. The laureate Anders Garpe and CG solemnly shook hands afterwards. They bent so deeply for each other that they were about to hit their heads. Afterwards CG thought that his mothers priorities during his upbringing had been misguided. Better that he had learned German in childhood than all these games and activities. During their school years Sibylla actually tried to speak German with her children but they found it a bit artificial.

²² Bo Axelsson. Carl Gustafs lärare om Carl Gustaf. Kvällsposten, 1968-04-03.

²³ Brita Schlyter. Lek och leksaker. Flera upplagor 1961-1978.

²⁴ Margit Fjellman. Sju år fyller han. Vecko Journalen, 1953:17.

²⁵ Svensk Damtidning, 1952:24.

²⁶ Herman Lindqvist & Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg. Carl XVI Gustaf - Porträtt i tiden. Ekerlids förlag, 2006.